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SACO MUNICIPAL LANDFILL

PUBLIC HEARING

AUGUST 21, 1996

7:00 P.M.

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1 MS. O'DONNELL: Good evening everyone.
2 I'd like to welcome you to the public hearing on
3 the Saco Landfill Superfund site. My name is
4 Mary Jane O'Donnell. I work for EPA in Boston.
5 I'm a section chief for the Maine, Vermont and
6 Connecticut Superfund section. In that capacity
7 I'm responsible for overseeing the cleanup of the
8 Superfund sites in the state of Maine.

9 There are a couple of people here with me
10 tonight that I'd like to introduce. There's Ed
11 Hathaway. Ed is the project manager for this
12 site. A couple of people in the back from the
13 State of Maine that I'd like to introduce, two
14 project managers for the site from Maine, Larry
15 Brown and Wilkes Harper. Also, Camille Parrish,
16 who works for the state of Maine, and she's the
17 site geologist. Also here is a court
18 stenographer, Peggy Stockford, and she'll record
19 all of the things that are spoken here tonight at
20 the public hearing.

21 The purpose of tonight's hearing is to
22 formally accept your comments on EPA's proposed
23 cleanup plan. I'd like to emphasize the word
24 "formal" for those of you who were at our
25 meeting that took place at the end of July, July

1 31st. Tonight's meeting is a little bit more
2 formal than that meeting. As you can see, we
3 have the court stenographer, and the entire
4 contents of this meeting will be transcribed, and
5 we will be responding to the comments that are
6 raised tonight in a document called a Responsive
7 Summary, and that document will be issued with
8 EPA's final decision document or action memo,
9 which basically summarizes our rationale for the
10 proposed cleanup plan and what that proposed
11 cleanup plan will be.

12 In terms of the format for tonight's
13 meeting, first Ed is going to give a presentation
14 that will describe the proposed cleanup plan, the
15 EPA's rationale for that plan, and also
16 opportunities for public comment relative to the
17 plan that we're going to be talking about
18 tonight.

19 A couple of things I do want to emphasize.
20 First of all, if you do wish to make a comment,
21 I'll ask you to please identify yourself and your
22 association with the site, if any at all. And
23 also during the formal part of tonight's meeting
24 Ed and I and the people from the state will not
25 be able to formally respond to your questions.

1 We're here just to take comments. However, we'll
2 be more than willing to stay after the close of
3 the formal part of the meeting to answer whatever
4 questions you might have.

5 A couple of other logistical things. The
6 comment period does close on August 31st. I
7 would ask you to submit comments to EPA by that
8 date. In the handouts that you should've
9 received when you came in, and if you didn't,
10 please feel free after the meeting to get a copy
11 of it, is the mailing address to send those
12 comments to us.

13 Again, just to emphasize, the entire
14 contents of tonight's meeting is going to be
15 transcribed.

16 With that as background, I'm going to turn
17 things over to Ed, who will discuss the proposed
18 plan, our rationale, and opportunities for public
19 comment.

20 MR. HATHAWAY: Good evening. Once
21 again, the agenda for tonight's meeting, my
22 section chief, Mary Jane O'Donnell, provided the
23 introduction, I'll provide an overview for the
24 cleanup proposal and the opportunities for public
25 involvement, and Mary Jane will open the hearing

1 for comments from the public. We welcome and
2 encourage you to make whatever comments you have
3 to the record for us to respond to in the
4 responsive summary. The hearing will then be
5 closed and I'll be glad to speak to you about any
6 questions or comments you have informally.

7 Just to provide the setting for the site so
8 we all -- we're all in agreement, we're talking
9 about the Saco Landfill. In particular we're
10 talking about issues to address Areas 3 and 4 at
11 the Saco Municipal Landfill. It's located about
12 a half mile from here off Foss Road.

13 The action that EPA is proposing to take is
14 basically based upon the studies performed by the
15 city of Saco under EPA and Maine DEP oversight.
16 We're proposing to grate the landfill out,
17 excavate contaminated sediments from the seep
18 area and place them under a cap on Area 4,
19 construct a multi-layer what's called a low
20 hydraulic conductivity cap with surface drainage
21 controls, to maintain the cap, and to provide
22 long-term monitoring and land use restrictions.
23 That is the proposal.

24 As a setting, the scope of this action is
25 just one part of the overall cleanup process,

1 Superfund process, for the site. We are going to
2 continue to investigate and evaluate the
3 groundwater, surface water, and sediments. These
4 continuing studies will be collected, and we'll
5 produce a remedial investigation report that will
6 determine whether or not any additional actions
7 are necessary at the site for groundwater,
8 surface water, or sediments.

9 Things are going very well at the site. We
10 are in a very much accelerated mode to get things
11 done quickly and cost effectively, and that can
12 only be done due to the cooperation that's taken
13 place between the city, the state, and the
14 federal government.

15 On the July 31st meeting I spent a fair
16 amount of time going over the studies and the
17 result of the study and the reasons for the
18 action that we proposed. Tonight I'm just going
19 to quickly summarize that the data from the
20 investigations that we've performed to date
21 reveal that we do have an area of groundwater
22 contamination, and that area of groundwater
23 contamination is essentially an area surrounding
24 Area 3, 4, and the lower -- an area of lesser
25 contamination surrounding Area 1. This is a very

1 shallow downgrade from Area 1. It's only in the
2 upper sand unit, and it's discharging before it
3 gets to Cousins Pond or the on-site pond.

4 The contamination in the area of Area 4, as
5 can be seen from this cross-section, is
6 essentially groundwater infiltrating the
7 landfill, going into the sand unit and the
8 bedrock, moving through the bedrock, and
9 discharging to Sandy Brook adjacent to the site,
10 and that's why we have shown this shaded area
11 here. This is essentially the area that has been
12 impacted by the discharge of groundwater to the
13 brook.

14 The overall objective of this action is to
15 contain the source of groundwater, surface water,
16 and sediment contamination, which we're going to
17 propose to cap the landfill, put a cover on it,
18 shut out the water that's moving into the waste,
19 and, therefore, result in hopefully a cleanup of
20 the groundwater and surface water.

21 We looked at -- we looked at the site and we
22 developed a set of alternatives as to what are
23 our options for containing the waste of the
24 site. The first assumption that we made was
25 that, in fact, containment is the only viable

1 option for taking care of landfills, especially
2 landfills that don't have a bottom liner. You
3 can't recirculate the leachate in such landfills;
4 so we weren't able to develop treatment or
5 removal alternatives, because the volume of the
6 landfill is too high and there's no liner in the
7 landfill.

8 We also made a determination that since the
9 groundwater is not moving through the waste, one
10 of the important determinations that was made
11 through the studies was that we do not have
12 groundwater moving from the side into the waste;
13 therefore, we did not have to develop
14 alternatives to block that flow or collect that
15 flow that would be moving from the center to the
16 waste. We do have that problem at many other
17 sites. Fortunately, we didn't have it here.

18 We also use the assumption that removal and
19 consolidation of the sediments that were
20 contaminated with arsenic was the best option and
21 really the only viable option for that.

22 Our final assumption was that the caps that
23 were previously installed in Areas 1 and Areas 2
24 are acceptable and don't need to be replaced.

25 Two alternatives were evaluated in a report

1 called an Engineering Evaluation Cost Analysis.
2 It is available at the library. The first one is
3 the basic solid waste cap. That would meet the
4 minimum requirements of Maine Solid Waste Closure
5 Regulations. The second is a hazardous waste
6 closure cap that would meet the most stringent
7 capping requirements both the federal and state
8 has as waste closure, both regulations and
9 guidance. When we compare alternatives, we
10 compare them based on three factors: The
11 effectiveness, the implementability, and the
12 cost. So we basically looked at those two
13 alternatives.

14 For each of them we weighed them based on
15 those three criteria, and the end result was a
16 proposal that recommended that alternative two
17 made the most sense for this site. The reasons
18 are that alternative two, the hazardous waste
19 cap, will provide the greatest reduction in
20 leachate generation; is the only alternative that
21 would fully meet all the federal and state
22 regulations and guidance for closing a landfill
23 that receive industrial waste; it would have the
24 most significant impact on groundwater
25 restoration.

1 In addition, other factors are that
2 alternative one, the solid waste cap, even when
3 we select an option that was to move towards the
4 solid waste cap, the state of Maine has current
5 guidance that would result in a cap very much
6 similar to alternative two to be constructed as a
7 solid waste cap. They have new guidelines that
8 are in place right now.

9 Alternative two also contained a double
10 barrier. The double barrier concept provides an
11 added measure of protection, because if the upper
12 barrier leaks, the double barrier basically
13 protects the cap from allowing infiltration into
14 the waste.

15 Just to give you a quick picture of what
16 that cap would look like, you're essentially
17 looking at five -- five-and-a-half feet of
18 material that would go over the entire waste. It
19 would put a gas ventilator that allows the gas
20 that comes up from the waste to essentially vent
21 into a gas layer and out through vents into the
22 atmosphere. We'd put two feet of a clay or a
23 quarter-inch panel of a clay substitute on top of
24 the gas -- gas ventilator. That is the secondary
25 barrier. The primary barrier is essentially a

1 sheet of plastic to be placed over the entire
2 landfill, and that prevents any water from
3 getting in. On top of the plastic you put some
4 sand. The sand acts as a drainage material that
5 drains the water away so it doesn't sit on top of
6 that plastic. In case you had a hole in the
7 plastic, the water might drain through. But with
8 the sand on top of it, it encourages the water to
9 move off. Finally, you put enough fill and
10 topsoil on top to grow a good grass cover and to
11 protect the cap from any erosion that might occur
12 under long-term.

13 What's the bottom line on this proposal?
14 The bottom line is that the basic capital
15 expenditures to design, build and install the cap
16 and do the quality control is about four million
17 dollars. When you look at taking care of the cap
18 over 30 years, we include monitoring and
19 maintenance, mowing, the present value of those
20 activities are about a million-and-a-half. So
21 the total cost over 30 years of this proposal is
22 five-and-a-half million dollars.

23 Once again, to, you know, summarize other
24 reasons why we felt this action makes sense at
25 this time, essentially it's timing. Time is

1 money. We want to get this site cleaned up and
2 controlled as quickly as possible. We think it
3 makes sense to go from the start of the program
4 to cleanup decision in a year. We can go to the
5 start of the program to construction of the
6 control in less than two years. When you look at
7 many other sites throughout the region, you'll
8 see that it may take five or ten years to get to
9 this point in the process and cost a lot more
10 money than we've spent to date. In a very short
11 period of time from a Superfund perspective we
12 will have control over the major source of the
13 contamination.

14 The other reasons are that it just
15 reenforces the partnership of EPA, the Maine DEP
16 and the city of Saco in trying to be proactive
17 and responsive to the environmental problems out
18 there, and we believe it's the most efficient use
19 of everyone's resources to get the problem solved
20 now and quickly.

21 I do want to just restate that, you know,
22 your involvement is very important to us. We
23 have placed all the results and information at
24 this site in the public library. It contains the
25 work plans, the engineering evaluation and cost

1 analysis, and all of our information updates, and
2 we certainly encourage you to go look at that
3 information if you want to learn more about the
4 site.

5 And, finally, your main way to have
6 involvement in this process is to either send
7 written comments to this address by August 30th
8 or to stand up tonight after I am through and
9 speak your comment into the record, and we will
10 make every effort to respond to those comments at
11 the time that we make the decision.

12 MS. O'DONNELL: As I said in my --

13 MR. HATHAWAY: I want to thank you for
14 your time and the opportunity to give you a brief
15 overview, and I'll turn it back over to Mary
16 Jane.

17 MS. O'DONNELL: As I said in my
18 introductory comments, our major purpose for
19 being here tonight is to hear your comments; so
20 what I'd like to do now is just open the floor to
21 anyone who would like to speak tonight and
22 address the cleanup plan that we are proposing.
23 If you could just identify yourself for the court
24 stenographer, that'll be great. Does that mean
25 no one wishes to comment? That's fine. The

1 formal -- Larry?

2 MR. BROWN: I think the state probably
3 should make a comment.

4 MS. O'DONNELL: Larry, just for the
5 court stenographer's benefit, if you will --

6 MR. BROWN: I'm Larry Brown, the
7 project manager for the state of Maine, Maine
8 Department of Environmental Protection. And I'd
9 just like to say for the record that the state of
10 Maine has -- supports this approach, and we'd
11 just like to commend everyone and the team for
12 having worked so diligently and come up with what
13 we think will be a very functional and efficient
14 operation.

15 MS. O'DONNELL: Thanks, Larry. Anyone
16 else?

17 MS. PATTERSON: My name is Carol
18 Patterson, and I'm here with my husband and my
19 son, John, and we live right in back of the
20 landfill, and I have drafted a letter that I was
21 going to send to Ed Hathaway, and if you don't
22 mind, I'd like to read it.

23 MS. O'DONNELL: That's fine.

24 MS. PATTERSON: We have received the
25 results of the testing of our spring well in our

1 house, and, as we are pleased with the results of
2 no contamination was detected in our water to
3 date, we still have some concerns with the well
4 contamination from the landfill on our land, Well
5 Number 3 and 4.

6 We are in favor of the capping of the
7 landfill and finally see a closure to this mess
8 in our backyard. We have lost a great deal of
9 pasture and wooded area for our animals due to
10 contamination of the stream and brooks in this
11 area.

12 Another concern of the continuing of
13 monitoring of these test wells and an ongoing
14 basis of future years, we do want the
15 contamination -- we do not want the contamination
16 to spread. Future sale of our land and the
17 quality of land and water is of utmost
18 importance. As we are very concerned, we are
19 watching this process very closely.

20 Like I said, we have had this nightmare in
21 our backyard for many, many years, and I'm glad
22 it's coming to a closure, and we will do anything
23 we can to help support it, but it's a nightmare.

24 MS. O'DONNELL: Thank you. Is there
25 anyone else who would like to make a comment for

1 the record? I will assume that there isn't, and
2 the formal part of the hearing is closed. Ed and
3 I and the individuals from the state will be here
4 as long as people want us to be here and more
5 than happy to answer whatever questions people
6 might have. We thank you for making the effort
7 to come here tonight, and hopefully we'll see you
8 again at some future meetings that we do have.
9 Thank you.

10 (THE HEARING WAS CONCLUDED AT APPROX. 7:22 P.M.)

11 * * * * *